

## Non-technical summary: Mobile Crisis Response Teams Support Better Policing — Evidence from CAHOOTS

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### What is CAHOOTS?

Crisis Assistance Helping Out on the Streets (CAHOOTS) is a nationally recognized crisis response program based in Eugene, Oregon. Teams consist of a medic and a mental health professional, dispatched via 911 to respond to calls involving mental health crises, homelessness, addiction, and interpersonal conflict. They operate without police uniforms or weapons and aim to provide immediate support and de-escalation—either alongside police or independently.

### What Did We Study?

This is the first large-scale, causal evaluation of CAHOOTS using detailed 911 call data from Eugene and Springfield, Oregon (2014–2021). We examined two key questions:

1. **What happens when CAHOOTS is newly available in areas or hours where it wasn't before?**
2. **What happens when CAHOOTS responds to one more call at the margin, once the program is already running at scale?**

We used two complementary, quasi-experimental methods to estimate the *causal impact* of CAHOOTS responses on arrests, emergency medical care, and repeat 911 calls.

### Key Findings

- **Substantial reductions in arrests:** When CAHOOTS becomes newly available in a time or area, the probability a 911 call leads to arrest falls by **76%**. Most averted arrests are mental health or detox holds.
  - **No negative impact on public safety:** Reductions in arrests do not lead to more follow-up calls or safety concerns. In fact, there are **fewer** repeat 911 calls from the same location in the weeks that follow a CAHOOTS response.
  - **Increased access to medical services:** CAHOOTS responses increase the chance of emergency medical support, including a **26 percentage point** increase in EMS presence and more transports to the ER.
  - **Strong cost-effectiveness:** CAHOOTS teams are significantly cheaper than police. When they replace police, the city *saves money*—even without counting broader social benefits.
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## Do They Replace or Complement Police?

- **Both—but mostly complement.** About **40%** of CAHOOTS responses replace police responses. The rest are joint responses. Interestingly, **most of the arrest reductions come from joint responses**, suggesting CAHOOTS helps de-escalate even when police are present.
- **As CAHOOTS scales up, it starts to respond to less urgent cases.** New capacity tends to cover calls that would otherwise go unanswered, rather than replacing police.

## Why It Matters

CAHOOTS is a model for dozens of cities piloting similar crisis response programs—from Denver to Minneapolis to San Francisco. This study provides the strongest causal evidence to date that these programs can:

- Reduce arrests without compromising public safety
- Improve access to medical services
- Save cities money
- Serve as a valuable **complement** to police—not just a substitute